

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 INR-05

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R 031038Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4217

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 3968

LIMDIS

BANGKOK ALSO FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LA, US.

SUBJECT: HABIB CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB, ACCOMPANIED BY CHARGE AND EMBOFF, MET JUNE 3 WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR AND A HALF. PHOUMI OPENED THE CONVERSATION WITH A LONG PERORATION ON LAO PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. THROUGHOUT HE EMPHASIZED THE PGNU'S DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO HAVE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE AID. "EVEN IF AID CHANGES ITS FORM OUR GOOD RELATIONS WON'T CHANGE. WE WANT EVEN MORE AID."

2. PHOUMI SAID LAOS WAS GOING THROUGH A PERIOD OF TRANSITION BUT THAT SINCE CERTAIN MINISTERS HAD FLED THE PGNU NOW FUNCTIONED MUCH MORE EFFICIENTLY. THERE WAS MORE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES AND THE ARMY WAS MOVING TOWARDS INTEGRATION. PREVIOUSLY THERE HAD BEEN SUSPICIONS. HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN WORRIED ABOUT COUPS D'ETAT. HE USED TO HAVE TO ASK THE CHARGE ABOUT THEM. THE CHARGE
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ALWAYS REASSURED HIM THAT THE U.S. SUPPORTED THE PGNU.

PHOUMI WAS PLEASED THAT THAT HAD BEEN THE CASE. NOW THE SITUATION WAS BETTER.

3. LAOS WAS NOW ENGAGED IN A PROGRAM OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY. IT WOULD HAVE THREE PHASES. THE FIRST PHASE WOULD BE THAT OF HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WAR AND WOULD LAST TWO YEARS, FINISHING AT THE END OF 1976.

THE SECOND PHASE WOULD BE TG

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4218

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 3968

LIMDIS

7. MR. HABIB SAID THAT UNFORTUNATELY THERE WERE MANY POINTS OF FRICTION THAT WERE PREVENTING THE SPEEDY DISSOLUTION OF USAID. HE ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO INSTRUCT HIS PEOPLE TO GIVE EVERY ASSISTANCE TO FACILITATE THIS DISSOLUTION. THE PROCESS HAD TO BE CARRIED OUT IN AN ORDERLY WAY. OUR PEOPLE COULD NOT BE MENACED IF WE WERE GOING TO BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER IN CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE. UNFORTUNATELY, THESE FRICTIONS HAD BEGUN TO AFFECT OUR OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE REEMPHASIZED THAT THE U.S. COUNTED PARTICULARLY ON THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO SEE THAT THESE

FRICTIONS DID NOT CONTINUE. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD CONVEY THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEWS TO HIS SUPERIORS IN WASHINGTON, WHO WOULD OF COURSE BE MAKING ANY FINAL DECISION. HE REEMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT OUR FUTURE RELATIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE CONTINUED IN AN ORDERLY WAY; THAT TIME FOR PLAYING GAMES HAD PASSED; THAT WE WERE NOW IN A PERIOD OF TRANSITION IN WHICH THE U.S. WAS RECONSIDERING ITS POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THAT OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON WERE FOLLOWING EVENTS IN LAOS CLOSELY. AT THE MOMENT THE EVENTS IN LAOS RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VALUE OF OUR CONTINUING RELATIONS.

8. ON THE QUESTION OF USAID DISSOLUTION, PHOUMI REPLIED THAT HE HAD INSTRUCTED MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND PLAN, SOTH PHETRASY, AND SOTH'S CHEF DE CABINET TO AVOID GOING INTO TOO MUCH DETAIL AND TO EXCLUDE THE QUESTION
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OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. MILITARY QUESTIONS WOULD BE DISCUSSED SEPARATELY BETWEEN "OUR MILITARY". HE ALSO WANTED THIS DISSOLUTION TO TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO AS TO ALLOW AMERICAN USAID OFFICIALS TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME LAO OFFICIALS HAD EVER ENGAGED IN SUCH TALKS AND THUS THERE HAD BEEN SOME CONFUSION AS TO HOW BEST TO PROCEED.

9. ON THE QUESTION OF ORDER; THE WAR, OF COURSE, CREATED THE GREATEST DISORDER BUT THIS DISORDER WAS LESSENING DAY BY DAY. HOWEVER, THERE HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATIONS. SOME IN THE GOVERNMENT WANTED TO USE FORCE AGAINST THE DEMONSTRATORS. THE PRIME MINISTER HAD FORBIDDEN IT. THE PGNU HAD HAD TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE DEMONSTRATORS NOT JUST ABOUT USAID BUT ABOUT ALL THE MINISTRIES. ONLY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAD BEEN FREE OF DISORDER. MR. HABIB INTERJECTED THAT THE PGNU'S RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS A DIPLOMATIC MISSION WERE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE TOWARDS ITS OWN MINISTRIES.

10. PHOUMI SAID HE WOULD SUPERVISE THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE DID NOT THINK THERE WOULD BE ANY MORE DISORDER DIRECTED AGAINST AMERICANS, THOUGH THERE WOULD BE DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN LAO. HE EXPECTED THERE WOULD BE OTHER PROTESTS WITHIN GOVERNMENT ENTITIES. IT HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR TO POTENTIAL DEMONSTRATORS, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE LIMITS TO THEIR ACTIVITIES. THE PRIME MINISTER'S ORDER AGAINST USE OF FORCE WOULD BE OBEYED BUT IF DEMONSTRATORS RESORTED TO VIOLENCE, THE SITUATION WOULD HAVE TO BE RECONSIDERED.

11. PHOUMI WAS ALSO CONCERNED WITH THE ROBBERIES THAT WERE TAKING PLACE ALL OVER TOWN. THE RUSSIAN AND

FRENCH AMBASSADORS HAD COMPLAINED TO HIM ABOUT THE SECURITY SITUATION. HOWEVER, THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, WHICH WAS NEXT DOOR, HAD HAD A NUMBER OF TYPEWRITERS AND OTHER ARTICLES STOLEN RECENTLY. THE CHARGE EMPHASIZED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD A PARTICULAR DUTY TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS. DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS WERE TOTALLY VULNERABLE. IF THEY WERE UNDER THREAT AND ATTACK IT MADE THE CONTINUING OF RELATIONS IMPOSSIBLE. PHOUMI REPLIED
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THAT THE PGNU WOULD TRY TO ENSURE SECURITY, BUT THAT THE LAO AUTHORITIES FACED MANY PROBLEMS INTERNALLY. HE CLOSED BY SAYING THAT HE HOPED LAO-AMERICAN RELATIONS WOULD IMPROVE FROM DAY TO DAY.

12. COMMENT: ATMOSPHERE OF CONVERSATION REMAINED VERY COURTEOUS THROUGHOUT. ON SUBSTANCE, PHOUMI'S VIEWS OF THE FUTURE OF LAOS WILL BE REPORTED AT GREATER LENGTH IN A MEMORANDUM. MORE IMMEDIATELY PHOUMI'S ASSURANCES ON MOVING AHEAD WITH THE USAID NEGOTIATIONS WERE ENCOURAGING. ON THE WHOLE, THEREFORE, MR. HABIB'S VISIT ARRIVED AT A MOST PROPITIOUS TIME TO GIVE A BOOST TO THESE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO BEGIN TO ESTABLISH THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR FUTURE RELATIONS WITH LAOS.
CHAPMAN

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